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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ADDIS ABABA 000060

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SUBJECT: SOMALILAND FOREIGN MINISTER APPEALS FOR
RECOGNITION AND AID

REF: 06 ADDIS3114 (NOTAL)

Classified By: POL-ECON COUNSELOR KEVIN SULLIVAN. REASON: 1.4 (B),(D).

1. (C) SUMMARY. In a December 14 meeting with Charge a.i. Wilgus and deputy pol-econ counselor, Somaliland Foreign Minister Abdillahi M. Duale expressed interest in establishing a closer strategic relationship with the United States, and appealed for both humanitarian and military assistance to counter the regional threat posed by Council of Islamic Courts extremists. Saying he was reiterating points made in previous discussions in Nairobi, FM Duale requested that the USG provide financial and technical support for 2007-2008 elections in Somaliland; financial support for Somaliland's formal education system, to provide an alternative to radical Islamic schools; capacity-building for Somaliland's security services (military, police, coast guard, and immigration); and ammunition and military training, to counter possible preemptive moves by Somalia's Council of Islamic Courts (CIC). FM Duale asked that the USG support Somaliland's bid for recognition by the African Union, as some African countries had indicated they would. Duale reviewed regional cooperation between Somaliland and Yemen, Ethiopia, and Kenya, to counter the CIC threat, but said he had rejected AU Chairperson Konare's recommendation to meet with Somali TFG President Yusuf, as such a meeting would constitute "high treason." While Somaliland clearly supports Ethiopian intervention against a perceived CIC threat to the Horn of Africa, Duale's observations underscore that significant political tensions remain between Somaliland authorities and Somalia's TFG. END SUMMARY.

SEEKING CLOSER STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S.

2. (C) In response to the observation by Charge Wilgus that Embassy Nairobi took the USG lead on Somalia issues, Duale said he was reiterating points he had made recently in "very fruitful" discussions with Amb. Ranneberger in Nairobi. Somaliland sought a closer strategic relationship with the United States, Duale said, in order to promote democracy, governance, and counter-terrorism in the Horn of Africa. Duale expressed gratitude for USG engagement in Somalia and Somaliland, saying the United States had a critical role to play in the region. He thanked the United States for the humanitarian assistance it provided indirectly to Somaliland

through projects and international organizations, saying such assistance was crucial to support 2007 elections that would strengthen democracy in Somaliland. He noted that the United States had been among the first in 1960 to recognize Somaliland, had later sheltered many Somalilanders as refugees, and had opposed Siad Barre during the 1988 "genocide."

13. (C) FM Duale requested both humanitarian and military assistance from the United States, as "democracy (alone) will not defend us." Noting USG support of teacher training in Hargeisa, Charge Wilgus took note of FM Duale's requests, but reiterated Embassy Nairobi's lead on Somalia issues. Asserting that Somaliland was a "de facto partner of peace in the region," Duale asked that Somaliland receive any assistance for which the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFG) qualified. Duale made specific requests for:

- financial and technical support for the 2007-2008 election cycle;
- financial support (and/or scholarships or international visit programs) for Somaliland's formal education system, to provide an alternative to radical Islamic schools;
- capacity-building for Somaliland's security services (military, police, coast guard, and immigration);
- ammunition and military training, which were especially needed to counter preemptive moves by Somalia's Council of Islamic Courts (CIC), if the CIC succeeded in taking over Puntland and Baidoa.

"AGGRESSIVELY" SEEKING AU RECOGNITION...

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14. (C) Despite not being involved in any Somalia reconciliation processes since its "reconstitution" in 1991, Duale said Somaliland could play a significant role in fostering peace in Somalia and the Horn, as the only functioning constitutional Islamic state in the region. He noted that Somaliland had information-sharing agreements with Yemen, Kenya, and Ethiopia. Citing Somaliland's constitutional clause rejecting terrorism, Duale asserted that in face of the CIC threat, recognition of Somaliland was "the best defense," as it could help unify mullahs, diaspora, and other elements of Somali civil society. As a former British protectorate, Somaliland's borders were accepted internationally, he claimed, in contrast to the undemarcated southern borders of Somalia.

15. (C) Duale appealed for the USG to support Somaliland's effort to obtain recognition by the African Union, or at least to inform African states that the United States had no objection. Somaliland was "aggressively pursuing recognition in the African Union," Duale said, which would require an incremental approach to build support first among representatives of the 15-member AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) and then at the ministerial level. Duale said he had met recently with representatives of key AU member states, and would soon meet with Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum (January chair of the PSC) before traveling to west Africa. (NOTE: On January 7, FM Duale was to leave for Ghana. END NOTE.) Rwandan President Kagame supported recognition of Somaliland, as did Zambia and Tanzania; South Africa was "sympathetic" but was waiting for others to take the lead, Duale said. He noted that Ethiopia had an ambassadorial-level attache in Hargeisa, and was using part of Bosasso port. Somaliland had sought to court Algeria and Sudan, but many Somali fundamentalists in Mogadishu had been trained in Sudan, he said.

BUT TENSIONS CONTINUE WITH TFG PRES. YUSUF OVER PUNTLAND

16. (C) Duale noted that while discussions with AU Commission

Chairperson Konare had been "useful," Duale had rejected Konare's recommendation to engage TFG President Abdullahi Yusuf, as Yusuf had always maintained that the unity of Somalia was sacrosanct. Duale criticized the establishment of Puntland as "outrageous," asserting that Puntland was solely "an entity based on clan." In contrast, Duale said, Somaliland was composed of multiple tribes: its president was a former member of Siad Barre's security force and hailed from a minority. Duale said he told Konare that meeting with TFG President Yusuf would be "high treason," as Yusuf refused to make any statements on self-determination or respecting the will of the people, as had been done previously in Croatia or prior to the formation of Bangladesh.

REGIONAL COOPERATION TO COMBAT ISLAMICIST EXTREMISTS

17. (C) Duale contrasted the "terribly dangerous, frightening" situation in Somalia with peace and stability in Somaliland. Somaliland played an integral part in promoting regional stability, he said, with its emphasis on institution-building and good governance, based on a "viable, secular" constitutional state. Duale expressed concern about the regional impact of unrest within Somalia, noting that Somaliland authorities had long predicted that the CIC would seek to establish an Islamic state in region. Duale reviewed Somaliland's regional initiatives:

- Duale said he had met with IGAD authorities, and also sought to address the International Contact Group on Somalia in order to discuss security in Somalia.
- Somaliland assessed that the CIC was taking advantage of a "ripe environment" to target Ethiopia, due to its contiguous border with Somalia. Duale noted that Somaliland's Interior Minister was currently in Ethiopia for consultations with the GOE on cross-border security arrangements, including ensuring that Eritrean-trained insurgents did not use Somaliland as a base from which to destabilize Ethiopia.
- In addition to Ethiopia, Somaliland had

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- intelligence-sharing agreements with Yemen and Kenya.
- Duale noted that he had discussed with Kenyan FM Tuju the need to engage ethnic Somalis and other members of the Muslim community, prompting Kenya to organize a town hall event. Somaliland's "liaison officer" in Kenya had also been instructed to reach out to Somalis.
 - On the other hand, Duale added, Djibouti had made a "geo-political mistake" in allying itself with the CIC.

18. (C) Somaliland was monitoring the fighting in southern Somalia closely, Duale said. Somaliland also feared a long, protracted crisis and was concerned about CIC attempts to infiltrate Somaliland through bribery. Somaliland had no interaction with the CIC other than receiving threats, Duale added.

19. (C) Citing 2003-2004 killings of four Italian aid workers and the 2005 attempted bombing of a polling station, Duale said the Somaliland security service was closely monitoring CIC activities in Somaliland. The CIC considered Somaliland's constitutional order anathema to its vision of "peace and tranquillity" under Allah. Somaliland authorities had imprisoned one sheikh for advocating support of the ICU, while another sheikh, who at Friday prayers had called for supporting extremists against Ethiopia, had reportedly had his microphone seized by a worshipper who said it was absurd to support fanatics. Somaliland was the only country in the region who had apprehended terrorists, Duale said, and had recently sentenced two to 20-25 years imprisonment, despite threats from CIC Executive Committee Chairman Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys to free them. To counter CIC influence, Somaliland authorities were engaging moderate traditional leaders, dispatching representatives to six regions, and sensitizing the populace about the CIC's dangers through several government committees, Duale said.

¶10. (C) Asked about IGASOM deployment to Somalia, Duale underscored the importance of establishing a technical committee comprised of Kenya, Rwanda, and Ethiopia to discuss peacekeeping options.

¶11. (SBU) BIO-NOTE: Duale, who attended the last AU Summit in July 2006 as Somaliland's Minister of Information, replaces Edna Adan Ismail as foreign minister. Duale proudly referred to having resided previously in Long Island, New York, as a refugee.

¶12. (C) COMMENT: Somaliland formally requested recognition by the AU in a 13-page missive submitted to the AU in December 2005. Ethiopia's deputy foreign minister has privately advocated recognition of Somaliland as a bulwark against the CIC or others seeking to establish a "greater Somalia" by force (reftel). While it is clear that Somaliland FM Duale supports Ethiopian intervention in Somalia and shares Ethiopia's concern about the regional threat posed by CIC extremists, his continued rejection of dialogue with TFG President Yusuf highlights that the relationship between Somaliland and the Somali TFG remains strained and must be addressed by future efforts at political reconciliation. END COMMENT.
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